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Inside APHIS

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Hardworking Atlantans Relish Their Roles in the Olympics

This past summer, many employees played important behind-the-scenes roles in the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, GA. Major planning and coordination fell primarily to two agency units—VS and PPQ. Here are two stories about the APHIS role in the Olympics. The first story starts below, and the PPQ story follows on page 3.

For most Americans, the 1996 Olympic Summer Games in Atlanta, GA, brought another pleasurable dimension to summer. For many veterinarians in Georgia, however, life just got more hectic.

To admit 216 Olympic horses into the United States from overseas took a lot of advance preparation as well as on-site care. Normally, horses do not come directly into Atlanta but enter through permanent quarantine facilities at Miami, FL, Newburgh NY, and Los Angeles, CA. For the Games, however, officials agreed to allow Olympic horses (the Olympic term for these horses is equine athletes) to fly directly into Atlanta.

APHIS veterinarians helping to prepare for the event included a core team headed by Edgardo Arza, area veterinarian-in-charge of Georgia, four other veterinary

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APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

James H. Brantley, Jr., VS Animal Health Technician in Ellaville, GA., and a volunteer equine expert from Atlanta follow quarantine facility procedures to see if the horse is infected with equine piroplasmosis, a tick-borne disease.

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medical officers—Arnoldo Gutierrez, David Haarer, Wayne Dement, David Lariner—and Dawn Kelliher, an import/export program assistant. Riverdale, MD, staff veterinarian Joyce Bowling, spending much of her summer in Georgia, rounded out the team. In addition to this core team, more than 30 APHIS and State animal health officials were stationed in Atlanta to test and monitor the Olympic horses before and during the games.

"We had to modify many of our protocols to fit these equine athletes," says Arza. We started planning well over a year ago by sending team members to our permanent animal import centers in Newburgh and Miami. We got input and advice from the people there who handle horses regularly. Then we modified these protocols or developed our own. This past January a review team looked at our overall plans to make sure they were complete and appropriate." All the health requirements and all Olympic import procedures were then posted on the APHIS home page of the Internet for accessibility worldwide.

Arza and his team worked especially hard to make sure they were communicating with all the entities involved in the Games, including logistical contractors and airlines. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG, the organization that put the Olympics together) was a key group. Once the decision was made to allow the equine athletes to enter the country at Hartsfield International Airport at Atlanta, ACOG agreed to renovate and air condition the Hartsfield animal inspection facilities that would receive the horses. Arza and his team oversaw the modifications to both this facility and the new quarantine facility at the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers, GA, the site of the equestrian events. Then he participated with Georgia Agricultural Commissioner Tommy Irvin in a media tour of the Hartsfield facility this past June.

"Our agreements with nearby farms were another aspect of preparations that required a lot of our time," Arza continues. "We held many meetings and discussions with farm owners who agreed to stable the equine athletes during their stay. We had to make sure they understood and complied with

the requirements for contagious-equine-metritis waived horses."

Most of the equine athletes arriving from Europe came directly into Atlanta. The first shipment arrived in the third week of June, and the last shipment came about a month later. Horses from South America arrived in Miami and spent their quarantine at the Miami Animal Import Center.

At the Atlanta equine complex at Hartsfield, Arza and his team followed the processing procedures that had been developed months earlier: they confirmed the identity of each animal, gave each athlete a physical examination, and took blood samples and sent them to Ames, IA, for official testing. The horses were tested for four diseases: piroplasmosis, glanders, dourine, and equine infectious anemia. Next the Atlanta team treated each animal with an acaricide to kill ticks, and with acetic acid if the horses had come from countries affected with foot-and-mouth disease. Finally, their paperwork was double checked, and the athletes were monitored until the laboratory at Ames had returned the test results, on average within 36 hours of the horses' arrival.

"For the Olympics, APHIS and the Georgia's Department of Agriculture had agreed to allow entry of up to 20 horses who had tested positive for piroplasmosis," Arza explains. "Normally, we do not allow horses that are positive to this disease to enter the country. But in some parts of Europe and South America, this tick-borne

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

In the last issue of *Inside APHIS*, you reported that a shipment of 90 swine from Georgia to Vietnam was the first shipment of live animals ever to go to that country. This was definitely not the first shipment. I know because in 1970, I was involved with a fairly large shipment of Duroc and Spotted Poland China pigs to South Vietnam. I was in Vietnam in 1969 and 1970 on a University of Minnesota contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development's Civil Operations and Revolution Development.

As expected, the pigs quickly developed foot-and-mouth disease, and losses were significant. We delivered the various pigs to selected Vietnamese farmers via Air America, flying into the various air fields. Some of the planes were shot at and missed, and some were

shot at and hit from small-arms ground fire.

Our team consisted of four U.S. civilian veterinarians. We provided veterinary support for these particular pigs, but more importantly, we vaccinated thousands and thousands of swine for hog cholera and water buffalo and cattle for Asiatic hemorrhagic septicemia and rinderpest. The poultry and duck industries were of great importance also. Foot-and-mouth disease was endemic, and we concentrated on the diseases of greatest severity.

Our vaccines were produced at the Pasteur Institute, Saigon, by Vietnamese staff plus some outstanding U.S. Army and Air Force veterinarians.

A. Russell Burgess
AVIC, Wyoming

Inside APHIS

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Director:
Patrick Collins

Managing Editor:
Rick McNaney

Editor/Designer
Mary Yurkovich

Editorial Assistant
Estela Bock

Photographer
Ann Czapiewski

Atlanta Office Estimates Number to Arrive at Summer Games

By Kevin Harriger, PPQ, Georgia

For 17 days this past summer, the world's attention was focused on Atlanta, GA, the host city of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Most people will remember the time as simply the Olympics. But APHIS employees in Georgia will remember much, much more—the 4 years of meetings, planning, preparation, negotiating, and anxious anticipation that preceded the Olympics. We'll affectionately remember those Olympians that our employees processed with a smile and that we later saw competing in the Games. Most importantly, we'll remember ourselves as a small but significant part of what we call the "Olympic endeavor."

The most difficult task associated with our planning process revolved around the lack of accurate information. Nobody could estimate with any degree of accuracy what our workload would be. So we took a shot in the dark and decided that we could manage the incoming flights and passengers by adding a handful of employees to our existing staff. We brought in nine temporary duty employees: three PPQ officers, three K-9 officers, two REAC investigators, and a regional program manager. We also assigned our domestic officer to inspect cargo, and I came to Atlanta. With these additions, we were able to operate an additional x-ray machine and have a full complement of employees for passenger screening and boarding.

During the Olympics, the number of passengers arriving in Atlanta increased to a daily average of 20 percent. Olympians, Olympic family members, and others from over 70 countries entered the country through Atlanta's airport.

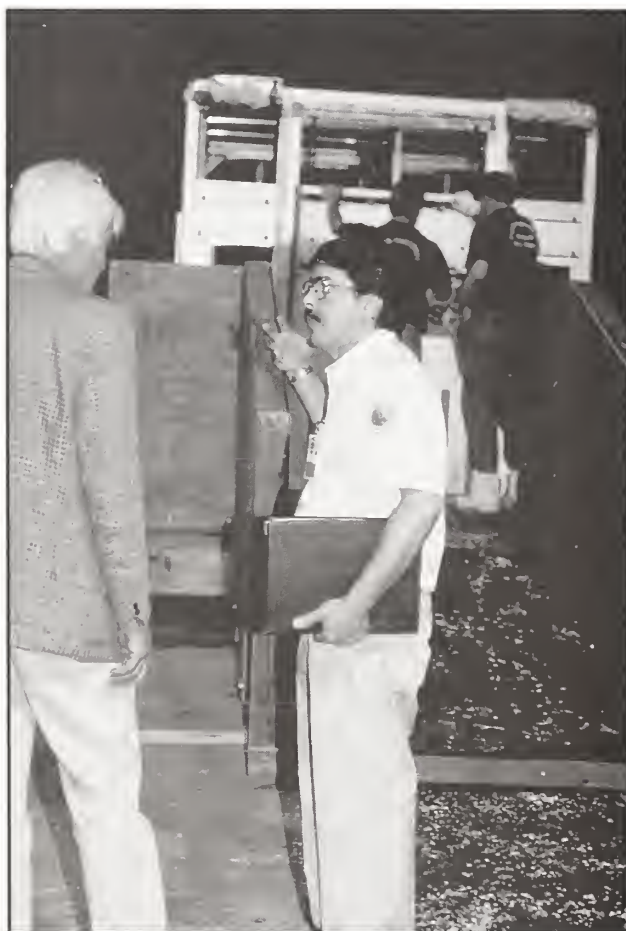
Our inspections yielded several significant seizures, some from boarding and some from passenger screening. Seizures included 36 pounds of prohibited meat from passengers arriving on a Hungarian flight; 24 pounds of prohibited meat from a Spanish passenger; 20 pounds of prohibited meat from passengers off a German flight; 75 pounds of prohibited fruit off a Czech Republic flight; 35 pounds of prohibited meat from passengers off a Ukrainian flight; and 30

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disease is common. Some top Olympic contenders had tested positive for the disease in the country of origin. So, we granted a waiver to those horses, allowing them to enter the country for the Games under strict quarantine," explains Arza.

Olympic horses could compete in three different events—dressage (precision movements), stadium jumping, and a 3-day event, which included the first two plus a cross-country event. Piroplasmosis-infected participants were not allowed to compete in the cross-country event.

"We had to refuse entry to one French horse," says Arza. "This athlete was a top contender, scheduled to compete in the 3-day event. It had tested negative on the pretest, but during quarantine at Hartsfield, it



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

Ed Arza, (right) veterinarian in charge of the importation of horses for the Olympics, explains the process of unloading the first shipment of horses into the quarantine facility at Hartsfield International Airport's equine center in Atlanta.

tested positive to piroplasmosis.

I had calls from the horse's owner, the French Embassy, and our Administrator," recalls Arza. "We were sorry, but we couldn't let it come in."

As soon as the results were back from Ames, the equine athletes that tested negative were sent to training facilities or to the Georgia International Horse Park. Those that tested positive for piroplasmosis were transported directly to the quarantine facility at Georgia International Horse Park, where they remained for their stay in this country.

Arza, his team, and cooperating State employees were also responsible for making sure that the horses and transport vehicles were carefully inspected for ticks, the vector or carrier of piroplasmosis. If ticks were discovered on any animal, the entire shipment was treated with an approved acaricide. Federal and state animal health employees started monitoring for ticks at the horse park last April and continued these activities through August.

"We tried to make sure the equine athletes were moved safely and efficiently and that arrangements were as stress free as possible for them," Arza says. "Preparing and carrying out our part in the Olympics took a lot of work," but I think I speak for all of us when I say we were all honored to have a role in the 1996 Summer Olympics." ♦

BBEP Employees to Realign With Other Units on October 1

On October 1, 1996, Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection (BBEP), one of the nine major program units in the agency, will no longer exist as BBEP. Its eight staffs are now in the process of realigning with other units in APHIS (see the sidebar on page 5).

"The APHIS Management Team (AMT) made the decision to realign BBEP this past April," says John Payne, Acting Director of BBEP, "because it wanted to align BBEP more closely with the APHIS vision. It is now time to position the three separate parts of BBEP—biotechnology, veterinary biologics, and environmental protection—so that we are ready for the future."

1988 Reorganization

BBEP was created in the 1988 reorganization of the agency. At that time, APHIS needed a major initiative to handle biotechnology—a new science that had the potential to be big, controversial, and highly visible. The existing structures were inadequate—one small staff in the Office of the Administrator to coordinate biotechnology issues and another small staff in PPQ for issuing biotechnology permits. No infrastructure existed to put the regulatory process for biotechnology into place.

Approving new genetically engineered products would include making a determination of whether or not they were harmful to the environment and, at the time, the agency lacked a comprehensive system for analyzing and documenting environmental impacts. There needed to be coherence between biotechnology and environmental policies and a strengthening of all environmental assessments in APHIS.

In VS, the VB staff had looked at the first genetically engineered vaccine shortly before the 1988 reorganization and went forward with issuance of the permit without any field testing for environmental impact. The need to remedy this deficiency led to linking VS' VB staff with biotechnology and focusing on building multidisciplinary teams with emphasis on environmental assessment in the newly created BBEP unit.

"The goals that led to the formation of BBEP in 1988 have now been accomplished for the

most part," says Payne. "We have built multidisciplinary teams of scientists in each of the three BBEP components; we have an agency-wide process for environmental assessment and ecological risk assessment; and our biotechnology and biologics programs have received high customer ratings.

Reasons for Realignment

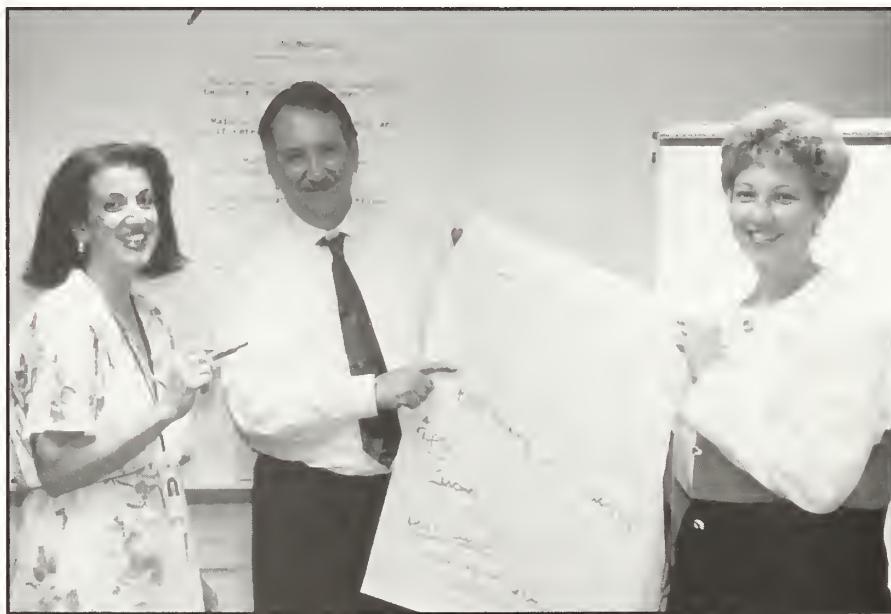
"The future, however, demands that we change again. BBEP occupies only two line items in the APHIS budget, and two-thirds of one line item goes to the VBL part of VS's National Veterinary Services Laboratories. In an era of streamlining and downsizing, budget constraints on fewer than two line items will not give us much flexibility in management," comments Payne.

In addition to the split budget line item, there were other difficulties that occurred after VB and VBFO were separated from VS' VBL. Testing functions got separated from pre-licensing and inspection functions, and all suffered from a lack of unified management. Last November, the biologics program asked for PPD's assistance in initiating a review of the program. As part of the review, it surveyed the biologics industry as well as employees in both BBEP

and VS programs. A majority of both the employees and the industry wanted the biologics program to be consolidated in VS.

"The flexibility provided by consolidating VB, VBFO, and VBL will allow more opportunities for innovation," comments Payne. Envisioned is a Center for Veterinary Biologics. Program consolidation in VS will allow for innovation and enthusiasm in planning for this event. The Center will be co-directed by David Espeseth (VB), Donald Randall (VBFO), and Randall Levings (VBL), directors of the current staffs.

With respect to the biotechnology component of BBEP, the focus is shifting from the testing and approval process to marketing genetically engineered crops. The biotechnology staffs now have approved 21 genetically engineered crop plants. Farmers are growing many of these plants, and some will be traded this year. The focus for biotechnology will shift to trade in commodities derived from genetically modified crops. Japan and the European Union have just finalized their approvals process for these importations. With this new emphasis comes the need for close coordination with others in the agency responsible for phytosanitary standards and



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

BBEP Director John Payne (center) meets with the transition team in August to review realignment plans. PPD's Martina Sawicki (left) and OPD's Mary Ellen Keyes (right) assist with the planning process.

Where Will BBEP Staffs Go?

<u>Current BBEP Staff and Acronym</u>	<u>New Name</u>	<u>Unit</u>
Veterinary Biologics (VB)	Center for	
Veterinary Biologics, Field Operations (VBFO)	Veterinary Biologics	VS
Environmental Analysis and Documentation (EAD)	No name change	PPD
Technical and Scientific Services (TSS)		
Data Support (DS)	No name change	PPD
Monitoring (M)	Biotechnology and Scientific Services	PPQ
Biotechnology Coordination and Technical Assistance (BCTA)		
National Monitoring and Residue Analysis Laboratory (NMRAL)		
Biotechnology Permits (BP)		

issues—PPQ. Under Payne, the four staffs moving to PPQ will form a new section—Biotechnology and Scientific Services—but will remain in their current workspace.

From its beginnings in 1988, the Environmental Protection part of BBEP had experienced some tension in trying to define its role. Should it be doing the environmental assessments or helping program staffs write them? Should it have a policy role, or should it be writing complex environmental impact statements? By aligning these functions with the planning and other central support functions in PPD, environmental analysis and documentation can provide support to all agency programs and give across-the-board agency support. These two staffs will transfer into PPD, remaining intact under Carl Bausch and Steve Palmateer.

Transition Team

To ensure that this major realignment would proceed smoothly, Payne asked Matina Sawicki of PPD to coordinate a transition team. Mary Ellen Keyes of OPD became the team facilitator and with the support of Bill Zybach as lead consultant was charged with helping employees participate in the change. Payne wanted to ensure that all the issues and concerns would receive a fair hearing and that the alignment would cause no negative impacts.

"As far as we know, this is the first time that we have asked employees to help implement an organizational change," says Keyes. "On our transition team are a representative from each BBEP

staff and a representative of each unit receiving a BBEP staff. ADC is also on the team as an interested customer. In addition, there are three of us from OPD that are part of the team."

Transition team members include BBEP Director Payne (team leader), Susan Koehler (BP), Quentin Kubicek (BCTA), Clarisse Cleare-Stahl (VB), Steve Palmateer (TSSDS), Ron Berger (TSSM), Steve Gilmore (EAD), Steve Karli (VBFO), Randall Levings (VBL), Joe Ford and Rebecca Yarbrough (NMRAL), Sid Cousins (PPQ), Bill Clay (ADC), Joan Arnoldi and Dick Rissler (VS), Matina Sawicki and Ken Waters (PPD), Bill Zybach, Mary Ellen Keyes, and Van Pichler (OPD).

OPD help included the development of a team charter, which gave the team the authority to make the realignment work, a timeline for making changes, and individual meetings with employees so the team could understand what was important to them. "All the BBEP employees are going into different cultures," says Keyes.

Where Will I Go?

"The transition team has been managing three kinds of issues," says Sawicki, "personal issues, program-unit issues, and customer/stakeholder issues." To understand fully what the issues were, the transition team asked each BBEP staff member to define the issues and to rank them in order of importance. The personal issues included questions like "Will I be able to continue my collateral duties in my new unit?" and "Where will I go?"

Program-unit issues included

questions like, "Will we share the software of the unit we go into? Will we share a LAN? Will EAD and TSSM be sitting together when they merge with PPQ? Who will be giving us services like computer support?"

Customer and stakeholder issues included what impact the realignment would have on BBEP customers. ADC, for example, is an important customer of TSS' Data Support. ADC relies heavily on this group of three employees to get its pesticide registrations through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over

the years the Data Support group has built a good working relationship with EPA. ADC wants to make sure that Data Support will continue to provide the liaison with EPA that is crucial to all ADC field work involving pesticides.

The transition team also asked BBEP and receiving program units which communication tools they favored for communicating the transition process. Participants valued unit meetings, but also timely communication of information and decisions through e-mail; sharing organizational charts and position descriptions; a newsletter, interprogram staff meetings, and joint BBEP and receiving unit "get acquainted" activities. These tools are all currently in use.

In August, OPD distributed a survey to all BBEP employees and a selection of PPQ and VS employees who will interact with the new staffs. "We want to know how employees are coping at this point," says Keyes. "We will be using the data we get from this survey as a baseline of where the organization is today. In 6 to 8 months, we will repeat the survey. The results will help managers assess the progress of the transition."

Phase four of the timeline for the realignment will be implemented in May of 1997. Then the team will be looking at what is working, what is not, and evaluating the whole process.

"We have been led, not driven, by developments in the industry we regulate," says Payne. "I think the changes we are making now will position us well for the future." ♦

Northeastern Office Studies Need for Respiratory Protection

By Dominic Santoro, VS, Albany, NY

For the past 2 to 3 years, VS' Northern Regional Office in Albany, NY, has participated in an industrial hygiene survey conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service's (PHS) Division for Federal Occupational Health. PHS staff studied the environmental and occupational safety and health hazards facing employees who work in various types of facilities. The study concentrated on conditions in poultry-confinement facilities, swine-confinement facilities, and bird-quarantine facilities.

VS Area employees from Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey assisted PHS staffers in their evaluations of five of these facilities in the Northern Region. Accompanied by PHS employees during routine and nonroutine visits to these facilities, these VS employees served as subjects for personal exposure monitoring. At the poultry facility they wore equipment so the PHS employees could conduct sampling for ammonia, bacteria, and dust intake. At the swine facilities, they conducted sampling for airborne dust and particles and tested noise levels as well. You can't imagine how loudly pigs can squeal when they are being bled!

Evaluations of the safety and health risks of working in these facilities led VS' Northern Regional Office to develop a respiratory



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. PHS/DFOH, REGION II, NEW YORK CITY.

Fred Launer, animal health technician from New England (right), makes sure the respirator of Jim Silverio, animal caretaker from the New York Animal Import Center, maintains a proper fit and seal.

protection program in conjunction with PHS. As the final piece of the project, our region conducted a train-the-trainer session where employees received hands-on training on the proper selection and use of respiratory protection equipment. PHS provided the training.

Overall, the training experience proved to be beneficial to all participants. Our employees are now charged with taking the information they learned from the training experience back to their respective areas and educating more employees on respiratory protection. ♦

Employees May Need a New Form for Life Insurance

By Tiana Richardson, Human Resources Operations, M&B

A revised version of form SF-2823, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Designation of Beneficiary, was issued effective July 1995. Employees needing to change their designation of beneficiary should be careful that they do not use previous editions of this form. Employees who already have an SF-2823 on file in their official personnel folder do not need to complete a new one. Here are some tips for proper completion of the SF-2823:

You may elect up to four beneficiaries through fractions or percentage, but they must total 100 percent. You may elect different beneficiaries for basic life and optional insurances but they must total 100 percent. Be sure to use percentages; dollar amounts are not acceptable.

A new block on the revised SF-2823 requests information about you or your assignee. Please complete this section in its entirety. Remember to sign and date the form and have two witnesses

(other than your beneficiaries) verify your designation.

If the form is not thoroughly completed, it will be returned to you. Please forward your completed designation of beneficiary to your servicing HRO processing associate. If you have questions about the form, please contact me. I work in Minneapolis, MN, in M&B's Human Resources Operations at (612) 370-2087. ♦

Interns, Scholars Receive Welcome From MRP Officials

This past June, Deputy Assistant Secretary Shirley Watkins (far bottom right), welcomed summer interns and national scholars (center four rows) to Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) at a ceremony at the USDA's South Building. Following the program, Watkins hosted a reception for the students, their supervisors, mentors, and coordinators. The students and interns are flanked on their left by (front to back) former APHIS Administrator Lonnie King, AMS Administrator Lon Hatamiya, Tom O'Brian, Assistant to Hatamiya, and GIPSA Administrator James Baker. Above Watkins on the right are MRP Assistant Secretary Mike Dunn, and APHIS Chief of Staff Rick Certo.



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

Orlando's New National Training Center Gets Winning Name

By Wendy Beltz, PPQ, and Anna Cherry, LPA

PPQ's detector dog program will soon have a single national training center. In early 1997, the three regional detector dog training centers—in Miami, FL, San Francisco, CA, and at JFK Airport, NY—will be merged into a new center—USDA's National Detector Dog Training Center located in Orlando, FL.

PPQ held a contest to find a name for the center, and the winners were Sandy Seward, PPQ canine trainer, and Vic Jacobsen, PPQ canine officer. A panel of 10 people in PPQ and the canine program convened, via conference call, and selected the winning name. Laura Greiner at ADC's Denver Wildlife Research Center received a runner-up certificate for her suggestion of "National Detector Dog Training Center."

"I would like to thank the APHIS employees who participated in the Training Center Contest," says Wendy Beltz, PPQ's Central Region canine coordinator. "Showing their support for the canine program, APHIS employees submitted more than 1,000 suggestions. Unfortunately, we could pick only one."

PPQ canine officers and beagles will complete basic training at the national training center, and then be deployed to their duty stations. The mission of USDA's National Detector Dog Training Center is to operate a center of excellence to train detector dog teams in the protection of American agriculture, to develop and transfer new knowledge, and to provide high-quality service to its customers.

The center will be located on almost 2 acres of land in Orlando with the buildings occupying 7,800 square feet. Included will be kennels for 30 dogs, five quarantine runs, postal and passenger training areas, and classrooms. The center will also have 24-hour fire and break-in monitoring and a fire sprinkler system. Beginning plans are to have three full-time trainers and a coordinator on site, as well as support personnel to help care for the office and dogs.

Several USDA groups will celebrate the opening of the training center at a ceremony, probably in late January 1997. Watch for details on what will happen throughout APHIS to recognize the Detector Dog Program. ♦

Statistician Designs a Quantitative Analysis for Houston

Are detector dog teams efficient and effective in detecting prohibited agricultural products that international passengers bring into this country? How efficient and effective are these dog teams? You-yen Yang, a mathematical statistician from Methods Development in PPQ, answers the first question with an emphatic "yes" and the second question with a strong "very."

He explains that although PPQ has never had quantitative answers to these questions, the program recognizes the need for these kinds of data. For this reason, Yang was assigned the task of developing a good study design that would yield statistically sound data on PPQ's agricultural quarantine inspection program.

Yang's immediate task was to define the study's objective, considering the availability of resources under given conditions. After a period of brainstorming with Port Operations' staff officer Jim Smith, Yang developed his study design. He learned that PPQ uses officers known as "rovers" to prescreen passengers' luggage in all airports. Yang thought that PPQ could learn a lot about how effective and efficient its inspection approaches were if he could compare the effectiveness and efficiency of rovers' techniques with those of detector dog teams. He could make this comparison, he thought, at very little additional cost over studying the dog teams alone.

Considering the available resources, Yang selected Houston Continental Airport as a study site. The daily Air France flight was chosen because of its arrival time during a period of light air traffic. Every piece of passenger baggage on this flight was inspected for 20 consecutive flights. First, rovers prescreened the passengers' baggage at the claim area; then, detector dogs sniffed each piece of baggage while passengers waited in line for the U.S. Customs inspection before the baggage went through x-ray inspection.

Inspecting the luggage of an entire plane load of people is a very labor-intensive, time-consuming task. Above all, it is inconvenient to passengers. But the contributions of many different groups helped the project run smoothly.



APHIS PHOTO BY QUAYLE JOHNSON

K-9 Officer Luz Rosario talks to an Air France passenger during the test period of 100- percent inspection.

"The city of Houston's Department of Aviation cooperated fully with our study," says Alma Mercado, assistant officer in charge at Houston. "Houston officials agreed to set aside one of the luggage belts solely for the Air France flight. They also gave us two to three luggage handlers to help passengers put their luggage on the belt. These additional personnel really helped speed the inspection."

The U.S. Customs Service also helped out, assigning several of its officers to help direct Air France passengers to a line created especially for the flight. The inspectors conducted their business from that line, greatly facilitating the inspection process. "It never took longer than an hour for us to clear the entire flight," says Mercado.

To ensure the clearance process would always run smoothly, Houston's PPQ officers formed a team of multilingual speakers devoted to the Air France project. Tung Truong was elected as team leader. Members included Mercado, PPQ officers Ayyad Bastawrous, Thierry Mohn, David McClain, and Alex Nicola; compliance officer Mark Zentner; SPPQ officer Otto Boetticher, and K-9 officers Wendy Beltz and Luz Rosario. Texas PPQ

officers Eduardo Diaz and Larry Woodson came in on temporary duty assignments to join the team.

"The team worked together exceptionally well," comments Mercado. Whenever there were problems, the team resolved them, tinkering every day with the process to make it as efficient as possible, setting up and taking down the signs and stanchions before and after each flight. "We didn't want to disrupt the Air France operation," Mercado says. Because of this team approach, day-to-day operations ran smoothly, and Yang was able to collect the data he needed to complete his assignment.

Yang submitted the data collected at Houston to extensive statistical analysis and reached the following conclusions: Detector dog teams (beagles and their human partners) were about 10 percent more efficient but about 11 percent less effective than rovers—a statistically significant result. Yang also found that someone who appeared to the rover to meet the screening criteria for inspection was often of no interest to the detector dog team and vice versa.

(See STATISTICIAN on page 12)

Join the Cyberparty—Use Newsgroups To Talk About APHIS

By Richard Kelly, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD

They say that to watch TV is to stroll through a vast wasteland. By comparison, using Internet newsgroups is like a treasure hunt in a rain forest. (Think Indiana Jones hacking through vines, sidestepping snakes and spiders.) The problem with newsgroups isn't sterility; it's overabundance.

Newsgroups are those topic-oriented electronic bulletin boards with names like **rec.sport.sumo** (for fans of heavy wrestlers) or **sci.med.radiology** (where radiologists talk shop). If you use the World Wide Web, your browser (Netscape, Mosaic, etc.) almost certainly has the ability to read and post newsgroup messages. More on that in a moment; first, why would you *want* to?

If you want information on a particular topic of interest to you and you want to be sure that everything you read about it is articulate, intelligent, and on-topic, subscribe to a specialty magazine or journal. Or join a club. But don't rely on newsgroups as a primary source of reliable information. Newsgroups are mostly unmoderated, and people post what they think is relevant to the newsgroup topic. So in **alt.med.veterinary** you get messages about "polymyopathy in cats," but you also get messages about "pet ghosts."

On the other hand, newsgroups are useful for some kinds of information jobs. Some of them are good for sampling a cross section of public opinion. For example, **alt.agriculture.misc** and **sci.agriculture** are both home to active "threads" or conversations about bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Many groups are places you can ask a technical question and expect one or two detailed answers from qualified experts (along with a dozen semi-relevant replies).

Newsgroups are also good places to announce things—meetings, publications, agency initiatives. And you can do good work in newsgroups by replying to the questions of others. A single reply to a question about, "Why The Airport Took My Mango," could enlighten not just the questioner, but hundreds of other readers.

APHIS managers have found many items of interest in newsgroups in recent months, such as:

- Online discussions of our animal welfare programs in **talk.politics.animals**
- A pointer to a Web site in Holland devoted to brokering international offers to sell animals, produce, and meat in **alt.business.import-export**
- Feedback on VS' Will Hueston's cameo about bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) on the Oprah Winfrey show in **rec.arts.tv** and **sci.med.nutrition**
- Hints about possible smuggling of wheat from Alberta, Canada, into Montana in **alt.agriculture.misc**
- Questions about BSE risks in newsgroups as diverse as **alt.conspiracy** and **alt.food.mcdonalds**

In addition to using existing newsgroups, APHIS has established some of its own with names like **aphis.jobs** and **aphis.its.oracle**. These were set up to encourage easy dialogues across unit lines on topics of common interest. They are not heavily used right now, but their use may grow as more employees become comfortable with the Internet. And the ITS I-team can help you set up new APHIS newsgroups easily. Call ITS member Scott Florsck (301) 734-6245 and he or another member of the I-team will help.

Using Newsgroups

So how do you begin using newsgroups? If you have a Web browser or a separate News reader and are on a headquarters LAN, just look in the Preferences screen of your program and set the "News server" address to **news.aphis.usda.gov**. If you have a more complicated communications situation, ask your ITS representative for help. Once you have access to newsgroups, you can search the list of groups for topics of interest.

With a click of your mouse, you select a group of interest, and doing that "subscribes" you to the group until you tell the software to unsubscribe you. Click again on the selected group name, and article titles appear on the right

side of your screen. Now, move your cursor over to the right and click on any one title you'd like to read. With most newsreader software, you hit "Enter," and the particular article appears in full on your screen.

But the beauty of newsgroups is, you don't just get to read what others have said; you can say your piece on this topic, too. The process is simple: there will be a clickable button on the software's toolbar at the top of the screen to "Post," (i.e., reply). The software will then offer you several possible ways to post—reply via e-mail to initiate a private correspondence with the author of the original posting, or post an article to the group in response to the first piece, or post a completely new original item to the group.

Make a posting selection, and begin typing. It's that easy: the software knows who you are and what your e-mail address is automatically! It also automatically fills in the destination group (**rec.gardens**, for example). If you're in the "reply-to-a-previous-post" mode, the software automatically indents your reply directly underneath the original article in the newsgroup, where all viewers can follow the conversation. And later, when people read and respond to *your* comments, theirs will be indented one further notch. This feature helps everybody keep track of who's talking to whom.

Now that you know a little about how newsgroups work, when and how should you get in the act? APHIS has guidelines for using the Internet (Memo dated August 19, 1996, to all employees from Administrator Terry Medly) and a policy of empowering employees to share information about agency activities with the public. You don't have to be a high-level manager to do this! Every employee has responsibility for helping our publics understand what we do with their tax dollars and how we operate in fulfilling our mission to protect American agriculture.

As you stroll through newsgroups, be on the lookout for opportunities to spread the good word about our activities when they are relevant to subjects under

(See **NEWSGROUPS** on page 14)

Grasshopper Migrations Challenge Multiple Land Owners

By Bruce Helbig and Amy Mesman, PPQ, South Dakota



Grasshoppers can invade private cropland from fields inside Badlands National Park.

APHIS PHOTO BY CHARLENE SCHUMACHER

In western South Dakota, a multi-agency team is working to solve a grasshopper problem on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Emerging last year to plague a landowner whose 8,000-acre farm is adjacent to Federal property, grasshoppers this year face a formidable team intent on preventing a repeat migration.

In June 1995, a private landowner contacted our PPQ office in South Dakota. The landowner, Phil Burney, wanted us to validate a grasshopper infestation that was migrating onto his land from Badlands National Park land. The infestation was threatening to destroy his wheat crop. Our office followed up with a survey that confirmed the landowner's obser-

vations and qualified the situation for a crop protection program.

At our South Dakota office, we can implement a crop protection program when grasshoppers originating on Federal land migrate onto adjacent private lands and threaten farm crops. Typically, we will create a buffer zone between the private cropland and the Federal land by treating a 1/2- to 1-mile strip of Federal rangeland with a bioagent or an insecticide. This buffer will help curtail a migration of grasshoppers onto private cropland. We need permission from the Federal landowners before we can conduct our program.

In 1995, the National Park Service's environmental policies did not allow for grasshopper

management, so we were not able to implement our program. The landowner, who farms productive tableland elevated above the surrounding badlands area, experienced significant crop loss. "I lost about \$75,000 worth of wheat because of grasshopper damage," says Burney. "I can't continue to have those losses and expect to stay in business."

The Federal land from which these grasshoppers came is owned by the Oglala Sioux Tribe but managed or held in trust by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). As if this multi-agency ownership weren't complicated enough, each of the entities has

(See GRASSHOPPERS on page 13)

Joining forces against grasshoppers are (left to right) Charles Provost, Oglala Sioux tribe; Amy Mesman, PPQ Officer, South Dakota; Mike Carlbom, National Park Service, Badlands National Park; Darwin Kurtenbach, South Dakota Department of Agriculture; Bruce Helbig, State Plant Health Director, PPQ; and Russel Runge, National Park Service, Badlands National Park.



APHIS PHOTO BY CHARLENE SCHUMACHER

Olympics, from page 3

pounds of prohibited meat off a Chinese flight.

As well as processing our passenger flights, PPQ was part of the FIS boarding party responsible for inspection and clearance of passenger baggage, including tack and equipment of the grooms, trainers, veterinarians, and their equine athletes.

Our four canine teams were primarily responsible for processing hand bags of the Olympians. Sometimes working in tandem, our dog teams inspected Olympians from about half of the participating countries. The dog handlers seized 1,132 agricultural products as a result of their beagle partners' responses. As with the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, using our Beagle Brigade to inspect athletes' luggage proved truly worthwhile.

Cargo Processing

Savannah, GA, the State's only seaport, experienced an increase in maritime cargo, mostly associated with Olympic venues (160 containers alone just for the yachting venue). Atlanta's air cargo increased only nominally. Some interesting air cargo shipments were the Olympic equine importations. In the spirit of One APHIS, PPQ assisted VS by compiling the cleaning and disinfection protocol, monitoring the cleaning and disinfection of the aircraft bringing over the horses, and approving and processing all commercial horse feed importations. Through collaboration with VS's Center for Import and Export, PPQ took the lead on reviewing, approving, or recommending approval to VS all horse-feed inquiries from the owners or managers of Olympic horses. We received 100 inquiries about animal feed, resulting in the importation of more than 63 tons of feed. Two importations of prohibited feed were seized and destroyed.

Being personally assigned to the Olympic endeavor, I worked beside our employees, witnessing firsthand their efforts. During an exceedingly fast-paced and high-pressure event, they consistently demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism, tact, diplomacy,



APHIS PHOTO BY CALVIN SHULER

Beagle Crystal stretches to sniff the contents of an Olympics family member's hand luggage. Canine officer Albert Roche (middle) and PPQ officer Andrea Simao (right) assist with the inspection at Hartsfield.

and courtesy. Their work has redefined the meaning of dedication and teamwork and reflects positively on the agency.

Hammer Award

Well before the Olympics took place, an Atlanta Olympics International Entry Subcommittee was formed, consisting of the heads of Atlanta's Federal, State, and local Government entities as well as

private organizations. This subcommittee received the National Performance Review's prestigious Hammer Award before the Games began for the group's contributions in devising an Olympic family member clearance protocol. ♦

Group Streamlines International Cooperative Agreements

By Erich Rudyj, Budget and Accounting Division, M&B

Last year a Quality Improvement Opportunity (QIO) group was formed to streamline the clearance process for international cooperative agreements. Championed by Deputy Administrators Phyllis York (M&B) and Alex Thiermann (IS), core membership included Ed Gersabeck and Dana Laster from IS and Erich Rudyj and Stephen Thompson from M&B. Additionally, about 10 "listeners," including USDA's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) attended various group activities and provided advice and input.

The group identified each step in the international agreements process that begins with an initial contact and ends with a signed legal document. Under the system existing at that time, an international agreement took up to 3 years to go through the process and cost about \$20,000 to establish.

When the QIO group presented its findings and recommendations to the APHIS Management Team (AMT), the AMT responded positively and requested an implementation plan addressing the specific elements needed to carry out the recommendations.

The QIO group recommended eliminating steps where no value is added to document processing, using creative pathways for establishing agreements, and forming and enabling an agreements support team.

Eliminating Steps

Looking at the current process, the group identified several steps that added no value to an agreement. These were the steps serving primarily to route and formally present an agreement to various interested parties for review and

comment. The routing process was manual, sequential, and hierarchal rather than electronic and concurrent. Routing, through various stages, took from 6 to 9 months.

The QIO group proposed that, once a final draft on an agreement was ready, the parties that formerly reviewed and concurred manually would receive an e-mail asking for comments. After 5 days, the agreement would be forwarded to the OGC for review, if required. This same E-mail process would continue to be used to inform all interested parties of an agreement's status.

Creative Pathways

The group identified a series of "creative pathways," or alternative means of doing business internationally, that would result in expedited agreements at a savings to APHIS. These included establishing parameters for operating under existing APHIS "umbrella" agreements; using cleared, non-APHIS agreements or other pathways as established by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Department of State, or other acceptable sources; and developing prototype agreements for "blanket" clearance by OGC and State.

To date, using these pathways has been a profitable process for APHIS. The agency is now able to process, clear, and implement a significant number of agreements with minimal delays.

Formation of a New Team

The Agreements and Grants Management Team (AGMT), proposed to be a new group operating in the M&B's Budget and Accounting Division (BAD), is currently being formed. This team

will be responsible for defining agreements policy and providing "one-stop" guidance on international and domestic agreements. The AGMT will also advocate use of an existing agencywide database of agreements information, ensure agreement compliance, coordinate with external groups, and provide special services as requested.

Hammer Award

In June 1996, the office of Vice President Gore's National Performance Review extended a Hammer Award to APHIS and FAS for their joint efforts to streamline APHIS' International Cooperative Agreements process. Recipient's of the award included the four original QIO team members as well as Denise Barnes, Nancy Bradford, and Lance Cope of M&B's Business Practices team and David Winkelmann of FAS. During the awards ceremony, the NPR also recognized Mary Van Denk (M&B) as a key supporter of the streamlined international agreements process and gave her the honor of wearing a coveted NPR hammer. Although receiving the award was a high point, the group recognized that it was not the end of the improvement process, simply the beginning.

In the future we will be extending the lessons learned from the QIO international cooperative agreements process to domestic processes as well. We hope to increase our communications and outreach efforts by getting information about agreements out on the Internet and by actively collaborating with agencies both within and outside of USDA.. ♦

Statistician, from page 8

Yang found that rovers and detector dog teams complemented, rather than overlapped, each other in detecting agricultural products. When both worked together, only 4 percent of agricultural products

went undetected. The study design was able to show that if rovers and dog teams had worked alone, 26.7 percent of agricultural items would have gone undetected by rovers and 37.4 percent by

detector dogs. Yang recommends that APHIS use both rovers and detector dog teams to enhance pest and disease exclusion from international passenger traffic. ♦

China—Jerry Diemer (VS, Hawaii) is working with the Hawaii Sheep Growers Association to lay the groundwork for exportation of sheep and sheep products to China. A representative of Agribusiness Development Corporation, as well as Najam Faizi from VS' National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) have provided information needed for opening discussions with agricultural officials from China.

Egypt—Najam Faizi from VS' National Center for Import and Export, and Terry Taylor, AVIC in Virginia, assisted with the exportation of 1,222 head of bred Holstein heifers bound for Egypt on the ocean vessel "Holstein Express" from the Port of Richmond, VA.

Honduras—IS' Carl Castleton attended the July ceremony announcing the eradication of screwworms from Honduras. APHIS has been working jointly with each Central American country to push the barrier for this cattle disease south of the Isthmus of Panama.

Mexico—APHIS, in association with the National Potato Council (NPC) and cooperating States, has drafted a work plan establishing phytosanitary measures for the trade in seed potatoes between the United States and Mexico. Dr. Richard Zink, Colorado State University, represented the NPC in drafting the work plan; Nick Gutierrez, PIMT/PPQ, along with Gary Green, IS-Mexico City, have initiated technical talks with Mexico based on this work plan. The plan was developed in reference to the North American Plant Protection Organization Standard for Phytosanitary Measures.

Also, On June 25, 1996, APHIS published a final rule in the Federal Register allowing fresh, chilled, and frozen pork and pork products from the Mexican state of Yucatan to transit the United States, under certain conditions, for export to another country. Although hog cholera exists in Mexico, the Yucatan was declared free of the disease in April 1995, and VS and IS epidemiologists believe that the risk of introducing the disease into this country is minimal. APHIS already allows the transit of pork and pork products from two other Mexican states.

Panama—On June 12, Secretary Glickman signed a letter to the U.S. Ambassador to Panama transmitting a report by an independent consultant on the location, staffing, and potential for privatization of a proposed screw-worm plant in Panama. If constructed, the plant would produce the sterile screwworm flies needed for the eradication of screwworm from southern Central America.

Russia—A shipment of 25,000 day-old chicks (breeding stock) was exported to Russia in July. Najam Faizi (NCIE) reports that this was the first ever shipment of live poultry from the United States to Russia.

United States—At the end of July, NCIE veterinarians Gary Colgrove, Robert Kahrs, Najam Faizi, and Andrea Morgan met with the Livestock Exporters Association of the United States to discuss expanding international markets for livestock. User fee issues were among the concerns addressed. From now on, APHIS intends to meet with this group twice yearly on VS export issues. ♦

Grasshoppers, from page 10

varying land-management philosophies. When it came to discussing the grasshopper problem, these different philosophies made reaching an agreement difficult. We all wanted the same outcome, but we couldn't agree on the best way to achieve it.

To prepare for the grasshopper migration in 1996, our South Dakota office, along with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, PPQ's Phoenix Methods Development Center, South Dakota State University-Extension, and the landowner got together and formed an Action Committee. The purpose of this committee was to develop a grasshopper-monitoring plan for 1996.

"Effective monitoring is essential," comments Russell Runge, Resource Management Specialist with the National Park Service. "There is no way we can begin to address the threat these grasshoppers could pose if we cannot watch their development."

With the assistance of PPQ's Phoenix Methods Development Center, the Action Committee adopted a monitoring plan and participated in its implementation. Our PPQ office has helped train workers from several Governmental agencies—the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Pine Ridge Indian Agency, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Badlands National Park Service, and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Following the plan, workers took ring counts and sweep counts to determine the number of grasshoppers in the area

and collected species for species identification. The committee wanted to make sure that the species migrating were crop-destroying species and not a range species.

With the data collected from the monitoring plan, the committee had the proof needed to free up money for aerial application of buffer zones adjacent to the Burney farm.

"This has been a great cooperative effort from the beginning," says Robert Bettelyoun, BIA Range Conservationist. "We consider APHIS the grasshopper experts, and we will continue to call on their expertise."

Our office learned a lot about the power of teamwork through this experience. Cooperative efforts such as this may be crucial to the success of future domestic programs. ♦

In Texas, VS Managers Focus on a Future Organization

By Stuart McDonald, Public Affairs, LPA Denver

The future was sharply in focus at the VS Managers Conference held this past June in College Station, TX. In a departure from the usual format of reviewing program status and implementation, VS managers from all over APHIS spent 3 days listening to key-note addresses, attending concurrent sessions, making presentations themselves, participating in hallway conferences, and holding poster sessions.

The theme of the conference was, "The Future Is Now! Are You Ready?" All the activities of the conference were geared to that theme. "Considering all the changes going on within APHIS, we felt it was time to focus on the Change Agenda and what these changes mean for VS," said Bob Nervig, Western regional director and chair of the conference design team.

All morning and afternoon sessions at this innovative conference began with a keynote speech designed to stimulate attendees to think about the future direction of VS. Outgoing Administrator Lonnie King and Dean of Texas A&M's School of Veterinary Medicine John Shadduck opened the conference with a joint presentation on "Change and the Future of Veterinary Medicine". VS Deputy Administrator Joan Arnoldi delivered a keynote address on "Veterinary Services in the year 2006." Professor Lowell Catlett of the Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business Department of New Mexico State University gave a dizzying view of agricultural and technological changes. Tom Fuhrman, a veterinarian with Dairy Services of Arizona, shared

total quality management principles already being used in the manufacturing and service industries and now being applied to agriculture. Staff veterinarian Gary Colgrove explained aspects of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade's regionalization concept and its impact on VS, and Susan Fiechtner of the Texas A&M Department of Speech Communication spoke of "Creative Ways to Deal with Change."

These keynote speeches were followed by concurrent sessions allowing attending VS managers to pursue their own areas of interest. "It was really hard to choose," said Oklahoma Area-Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC) Brian Espe. "I would like to have attended them all."

The concurrent sessions featured presentations on public confidence in Government, emerging trade trends in animal agriculture, animal production and the new social ethic, a big-picture perspective of aquaculture, a discussion of where VS fits in aquaculture, a review of the 1996 Farm Bill's affect on farmers and ranchers, a workshop on team building, a session on time management, a 2-day, hands-on computer workshop—"Exploring the Internet", and a first-aid course in media relations in a changing society.

"I wish I could have been in two places at once," said Bob DeCarolis, AVIC for Utah, voicing a sentiment heard more than once as the concurrent sessions continued.

There was a session on the importance of the Office International des Epizooties to VS, and others on the Global Rebound of Infectious Diseases, Public Veterinary Practice Around the World,

Non-Traditional Livestock Industries, A New Approach to Identification and Analysis of Emerging Animal Health Issues, and the Economic and Social Challenges to Leadership in Today's Business Environment.

Al Strating, now Acting Associate Administrator, but at the time of the conference Director of the Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), gave a presentation titled, "Veterinary Services Wants a Few Good Leaders for Management Positions." This presentation was augmented with sessions on dealing with racism and sexism and an overview of how the investigative process works and a discussion of the practical application of the rules and procedures regarding current issues.

All of the concurrent sessions were presented by recognized experts in the specific field being covered. "I'm a whole lot wiser today than I was when I first got here," was a remark heard many times during the week.

A highlight of the conference was the poster sessions held on two successive evenings following those days' formal agenda. Poster sessions are a simple and effective way of showing off what VS is all about. Various AVIC's, CEAH, the National Veterinary Services Laboratories, and the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory put on display various projects and/or outstanding achievements going on at their locations.

"It's really impressive to see all the areas where VS has a mission and has made an impact," commented VS Deputy Administrator Arnoldi. "By continuing to pay attention to change, VS will produce impressive results in the future as well." ♦

Newsgroups, from page 9

discussion.

Here's a real-life example of how one agency employee—LPA's writer-editor, Janet Wintermute—uses newsgroups as an outreach tool. In the newsgroup **rec.animals.wildlife**, Wintermute found this message [edited for space]:

"I work in a 762-acre park surrounded by urban development.

Over the past 3 weeks, we have found 7 mutilated raccoons. Most were only a few months old. One raccoon, after necropsy, indicated wounds made from a large animal. Last week, a coyote was spotted in the park for the first time. Would a coyote mutilate a raccoon for something to do? None of the raccoons except two had been eaten or sampled."

Wintermute recognized this

posting as an opportunity to explain, both to this requester and to the readers of **rec.animals.wildlife** in general, how APHIS' ADC program operates with regard to predator control. Here's what she wrote back:

"While all carnivores kill to eat, some kill more animals than they need to survive. Coyotes fall into this category. Notice that I do not say they 'kill for the fun of it.'

Congratulations!

... to Field Servicing Office (FSO) employee **Larry Law** and ADC employees **Diana Rangel, Kay Johnson, Mariette Amundson, Virginia Broyles, Cindy Carney, Patricia Poteete, Maggie Rayls,** and **Jeanne Swicke** for reinventing ADC's system to bill cooperators for their services. FSO used to generate bills from the National Finance Center accounting data and send them to ADC offices for adjustments. Usually inaccurate, the bills were returned to FSO for rebilling and then resubmitted to ADC, who would then forward them to their cooperators. FSO's Reimbursable Agreements Group reinvented the system. Now ADC submits bills to their cooperators directly and sends the necessary information to FSO through a unique bill numbering system. Cooperators send payments to FSO employees, who update the electronic system to reflect a payment.

The new system has reduced the payment time from 4 months to as little as 3 days. In salaries alone the cost savings for this reduction amounts to \$90,000 annually. Assistant Secretary Mike Dunn presented the National Performance Review's (NPR) Hammer Award to these employees in a ceremony on August 6.

... to FSO employees **Bob Rock, Brenda Alfords, Thomas Grahek, Rose Helseth, Elizabeth Johnson-Groth, Debbie Paulson;** to Budget and Accounting division employees **Kris Caraher** and **Debbie Meyers;** and to VS employees **Connie Osmundson** and **Inez Hockaday** for reducing costs associated with international bird quarantines. This team combined two incompatible systems into a single system that provides customers with information about their costs of importing birds in one monthly statement. Customers who use Federally approved bird quarantine centers to import birds

must prepay money into a trust fund. In addition, they receive bills for user fees from another system. Because the two systems were not connected, customers could receive past due notices for fees not paid even though they had a positive trust-fund balance. FSO employees asked customers how to improve the system. They used this information to construct a single monthly billing system that eliminates past confusion, restores customer confidence, and allows FSO to close out accounts and return refunds to the customer within 72 hours. For this reinvention effort, the group received an NPR Hammer Award from Assistant Secretary Dunn on August 6 in Minneapolis. ♦

Applying these phrases to a nonhuman carnivore would constitute anthropomorphizing them in the worst way. Perhaps animals that kill more than they need for food are merely sharpening/perfecting their hunting skills for next time, when they *do* need to eat their target.

"An urban park like yours that has a coyote in it is headed for Big Trouble. The coyote will soon be branching out into nearby neighborhoods and killing domestic pets.

"I strongly suggest you go to the blue pages in the back of your phone book and look up the nearest office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS is the agency home of the Federal Government's animal damage control (ADC) program. APHIS ADC personnel can work with park management

(at their request only) to trap and remove this problem coyote. ADC will either give advice (free) to park management so they can deal with the animal, or come in and take care of it for the park on a cost-share basis. ADC has offices in all 50 States, usually in the capital.

"If you are unable to locate the nearest ADC office, please contact me via e-mail and I will work with you from this end."

Note that Wintermute did not interpret APHIS policy here. For example, she did not try to explain how ADC decides whether a problem animal must be killed or merely captured and removed to a better location. That kind of information should always be provided by a program specialist.

The point of her post was to let the public know that the Federal Government, and specifically APHIS, is actively working on the issue raised by the original writer: a wild animal causing unacceptable levels of damage to an agricultural resource (the wildlife native to the

urban park).

Are there risks in voluntarily posting APHIS-related information in newsgroups? Probably the biggest risk is setting yourself up to do more work! Wintermute took that chance here because she believed that the opportunity to share information about APHIS was more beneficial than the threat of increased work could be detrimental.

Employees with Internet access can improve their service to the country by investigating newsgroups with an eye to helping our many different publics better understand what we're doing for them. The 'Net is a powerful tool for improving the taxpayers' view of our activities, and our personnel should join the cyberparty. ♦

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